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FBI UNVEILS DOUBLE AGENT

Soviet Spy, in From Cold, Meets Press

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WASHINGTON—The FBI on Monday unveiled a former Soviet spy turned double agent for the United States, displaying only his silhouette behind a back-lighted screen and disguising his accented voice with a modulator.

Although a high FBI official described "Col. Rudolph Albert Herrmann"—not his real name—as "a big fish" among illegal intelligence officers, Herrmann's espionage accomplishments during an 11-year assignment here seemed to have been limited. The FBI said he never obtained U.S. military secrets or classified information.

Nevertheless, the exposure of a covert operator who was converted to the American side is extremely unusual. Most spies who come to the public's attention do so through prosecution, such as Soviet Col. Rudolf Abel, the KGB secret police agent who was convicted in 1957 and later exchanged for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers.

Among other things, Herrmann told of an unsuccessful attempt to abort an Apollo space flight and of gathering political "intelligence" on American presidential candidates.

A veteran U.S. intelligence source said the feat of "doubling" the former Soviet spy and then unveiling him should not be minimized. The source said that an "illegal" operator—as contrasted to a "legal" spy formally attached to an embassy—could play a crucial role if U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations ever were ruptured. Until such an occasion arises, the "illegal" spy often is involved in no more than "training—getting to know the U.S.A.," the intelligence source said.

Homer A. Boynton, executive assistant FBI director who presented the double agent to the press, said the FBI thought the "American public should be made aware of the type of espionage activities that are occurring."

FBI officials said he was caught "some years ago" and convinced to cooperate. Herrmann said he was apprehended "due to blunder by my KGB contact."

The double agent role of Herrmann was called off last fall when the FBI learned that the KGB suspected he might be cooperating with U.S. intelligence. His wife and teen-age son, also in this country, had been drawn into "KGB service," the FBI said, and the KGB was insisting that the son return to Moscow for training with no guarantee of returning to the United States.

Herrmann, who said he was about 45 years old, began a 25-year career with the KGB in the 1950s while serving in the military of a Soviet bloc nation. He said he was trained in espionage methods, such as secret writing and cipher systems in East Germany and then sent to the Soviet Union for more advanced training.

After six years in Canada, Herrmann and his family entered the United States and quickly blended into American society, the FBI said. Working as a free-lance photogra-

pher in a suburb of New York City, Herrmann received intelligence assignments from his Soviet superiors by coded radio message.

The assignments included performing services for other Soviet agents and setting up "dead drops," or hiding places, later used by the KGB to exchange money or messages, according to the FBI.

On one such assignment, in January, 1970, Herrmann traveled "to a northern suburb of Los Angeles to locate a person of interest to the KGB," the FBI said in documents it released Monday.

Herrmann, answering questions through the modulator which slowed his voice and lowered its pitch, said he was asked to look for a 35-year-old woman "of certain physical description and find out if she was living in the (Los Angeles) metropolitan area."

He said he did not try to learn why the KGB wanted to locate the woman. "He can't get into that any more deeply," the FBI's Boynton interrupted.

One of Herrmann's initial assignments in the United States was to send an anonymous letter to U.S. authorities warning that an American space vehicle might have been sabotaged.

The KGB dictated the text of the letter through coded radio transmission, Herrmann bought a used typewriter and produced the letter, then traveled to Atlanta to mail it.

A spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said Monday that Herrmann's letter dealt with Apollo 8, the December, 1968, mission that sent three men into orbit around the moon. The letter was sent to the "crank letter" file and received no more attention than other such communications until the FBI asked about it, the NASA spokesman said.

Herrmann's primary assignment as a Soviet agent in this country, the FBI said, was to gather information of political significance to Moscow.

"He was badgered by KGB requests to develop information concerning the American public's attitude toward U.S.-Soviet trade negotiations, the neutron bomb and détente," the FBI said.

Herrman, speaking in an East-European-sounding, heavy accent, said he worked to get close to political candidates "so in case he would win I would somehow have my foot in the door."

In one such attempt, he recalled talking to a presidential candidate, whom he did not identify, at the San Francisco International Airport in 1976.

The FBI said that after he became a double agent, Herrmann provided "voluminous information pertaining to KGB methods of communications including accommodation addresses, cipher systems and secret writings."

Herrmann and his family have been granted asylum by the United States and resettled under a new identity, according to the FBI.